

APPROVED NOVEMBER 4, 2009

At 7:10 PM Chairman Charles Kimball called the meeting to order. Budget Committee members present were Michael Nygren, Andy Kohlhofer, Pat Martel, Laurie Allore, Sue D'Eon, Selectmen Greta St. Germain, also present were Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Ida Keane School Board Representative and Recording Secretary Jeanne Nygren.

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2009 meeting with a few corrections needed was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by Nygren. The vote was 5-0, Kimball and St. Germain abstained as they were not present at this meeting.

Tonight's meeting was specifically set for the Budget Committee to go through the budgets that have been presented to them, to discuss as a Committee to formulate questions and to possibly make their recommendations.

4130-Executive Town Clerk

Kohlhofer questioned whether to recommend cutting back the Town Clerk's hours. Kimball said her salary is set by the voters. Nygren read the Statute and technically the Selectmen can reduce the stipends. Kohlhofer said she did reduce her salary by \$5000.00. Kimball asked can we legally do this. Kohlhofer said that we can either recommend or not recommend. St. Germain asked what rate to set it at. Kohlhofer asked do we go with the Department request or Selectmen recommendations. Kohlhofer motioned that the Budget Committee reflect the Selectmen's recommendation. St. Germain asked for clarification regarding what could be put on the Warrant. Carlson said that DRA's recommendation was not put a Warrant Article if it is going down. Carlson said the salary will be just in operating budget. Allore asked regarding the Deputy salary being reduced to \$17,186. This was the Selectmen recommendation. A motion again by Kohlhofer to accept the Selectmen's recommendation of \$55,527 for the Executive Town Clerk, and this was seconded by Martel. The vote was 5 affirmative and 2 negative votes.

4140-Elections

St. Germain asked for a breakdown and an explanation for the Moderator salary line. St. Germain asked if all the elections were part of Holmes hours and she asked who gets the money in this budget. Carlson said the Supervisors and Ballot Clerks are included in payment of this line. The 4140-009 Meals section has been reduced by \$200.00 by having the Ellis school children involved in this process. Ida Keane said the PTA has a hospitality group that usually does a large food spread and she feels this would be adequate at the elections. Also the students have mock elections at the School and she feels helping at the real elections would be a great opportunity for the children. Carlson said also the Garden Club is involved in the elections and they do a great job. A motion was made by Kohlhofer to approve the recommendation of the Selectmen of \$11,111. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

4150-Financial Administration

Nygren asked a question on taxes and are we going to twice a year billing. Carlson said the Selectmen are using the Tax Collectors first rationale which keeps the money the same as last years even if two bills go out in 2010. If the Selectmen vote to go twice a year taxing that the Tax Collector said she is okay with option one for 2010. Kohlhofer remarked that option 2 is \$7000 more. Nygren said if they go to twice a year the postage line may have to change. St. Germain said this year the Tax Collector said she is okay with postage line as it is.

St. Germain said the mileage and conference line 4150-035 was reduced by the Selectmen for their recommendation total of \$28,950 in this budget. A lengthy discussion pursued on the payment of the Tax Collector and the obligation of the Town to pay for conferences. The cost of the conference registration itself was decided as appropriate to pay but the cost of the lodging and meals discussion was to not have

this is paid by Town taxpayers. If this applies to the Tax Collector then they need to revisit the Town Clerks line and adjust accordingly. The RSAs were passed out and read by the Committee. A part of this discussion was on the obligation to pay dues and conferences and the Town Clerk (when she met with the Committee) said it was a requirement. According to the RSA31:8a it is a may and if it gets voted down at Town Meeting they don't have to pay it, this RSA refers to a difference association, RSA 31:8 is Town Clerk statute. Paying \$500.00 to go to a convention isn't a good move with the Town employees and nobody getting a raise this year. Most of the training is done at the State level and conventions are for the propagation of the Association and not the Town. The understanding that paying the dues to the Association was realistic, but to pay for a weekend conference that the association puts on at an expensive resort when it could be held at a more reasonable costing place not so far away. Kohlhofer then motioned to reduce 4150-035 line to \$100.00 and Martel seconded. A discussion pursued and Kohlhofer asked that if we don't pay this is the State obligated to pay it. D'Eon suggested the fee for registration of \$35.00 also be added to this line. Kohlhofer then made a motion to amend Martel's motion to \$135.00, this was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 7-0. A motion for the total for line 4150 in the amount of \$28,435 was made by Kimball and seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

Kohlhofer said the Attorney General's office is suing the Local Government Center and there was a problem with the Association of the three parts (health insurance, liability insurance and oversight committee) and they are accusing them of commingling funds and who has that authority. Carlson said the LGC is all made up of local officials.

While reviewing the Treasurer part of the 4150 Financial Administration, Kohlhofer asked about office equipment. The rationale stated that this is for upgrades on the computer system. The Selectmen didn't recommend the \$200.00 in this line. Kohlhofer asked for the Treasurer to come in to answer some questions for the Budget Committee. Allore asked about dues and conference, and why she is requesting \$300.00 without a history of ever using this line. The Selectmen recommended \$50.00. Martel felt also that there is no history to back this line up. Kohlhofer feels that if she needs to put this in next year, then she needs to explain what she is going to spend this on and be more detailed and specific. Kohlhofer motioned to accept the Selectmen recommendation of \$6991. for the Treasurer section of the 4150 Financial Administration, this was seconded by Martel. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

4150 Financial Administration-Budget Committee expenses, Martel motioned to recommend the subtotal of \$2150. for this line. This was the seconded St. Germain. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

4150-Trust Funds. A motion to approve the Selectmen's recommendation of \$700.00 was made by St. Germain. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was 6-0-1 in favor with Martel abstaining as she is a Trustee of the Trust Funds.

The last section 4150 Financial Administration Audit. A motion was made by Kohlhofer to recommend the \$8,400. This was seconded by Allore. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

A motion for the grand total to recommend \$46,676 in 4150 Financial Administration was made by Martel. This was seconded by St. Germain. All in favor 7-0.

A motion to revisit the 4130-055 line of conferences was made by Nygren. Kohlhofer thought they should pay for the conference, but not the lodging as they did in the Tax Collector. After detailed discussion on whether to pay for conferences, the Committee changed their mind and put back into these lines the money to reflect payment to conferences in the Town Clerk and Tax Collector budgets reflecting RSA 31:8.

A motion on the bottom line recommendation total for the Tax Collector of \$28,900 was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by St. Germain. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

A motion for the grand total recommendation for Financial Administration 4150 of \$47,141.00 was made by Martel. This was seconded by Allore. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

4152-Reappraisal or Property

A motion to accept the Selectmen's recommendation of \$49,895 was made by D'Eon. This was seconded by Kohlhofer. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

Kohlhofer said the Budget Committee needs to explain at the Deliberative Session how important it is to vote and what the difference is if they go to a default budget. St. Germain suggested he do a letter to the editor. Carlson said at budget workshop they went to, how to present a budget to the voters was discussed. Carlson wanted to suggest presenting in a different format than what they have done before. This will give people more of an understanding of the budget. St. Germain also thought maybe to have a visual display may help the people in understanding.

Nygren asked if the final figures are in on benefit packages. Carlson went on to say they got the health insurance cost today and there is a 22% increase from last year.

St. Germain asked is there an agent that they use for health insurance. Carlson said they have an agent and because we are a small group they don't think we can do any better. Kohlhofer asked can we pool with other towns. Carlson said LGC was the former one, and then they went to BC through a broker. Once you break away you can't go back into LGC for 2 years, but it has not been cheaper. Nygren asked if there was a possibility to shorten the work week and put this to the Selectmen. He would hate to see people lose benefits. School went up 5% last year in their budget and this year if it goes up it will be even more difficult for people in Town.

4153-Judicial and Legal Expense

Kimball asked about Legal Expenses and what it covers. Carlson said this includes copy costs and for filing in the courts. A motion to recommend this budget for \$15,000 was made by Kohlhofer, seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

4191-Planning & Zoning

A discussion on the rationale for this budget was gone through by the Budget Committee. St. Germain said the Selectmen dropped Training and Conferences by \$250.00 and postage \$1000.00; advertising by \$1000.00 mileage was reduced by \$200.00 for a total reduction of \$2450.00. Their total recommendation for this budget was \$54,668.00. The topic of having the Town go to a reduced work week was made by Nygren. He suggested four 9 hour days for 36 hour week total for this budget. The Building Inspector is not open on Fridays at all. He would like the Selectmen to revisit these budgets and consider reducing some salaries. He doesn't want to take the health insurance benefits away from them but the money saved in salaries could supplement the increase in the health insurance premiums. St. Germain would like to see both of these departments part time.

The changing of hours could give the Town some time to recoup some money seeing that revenues are down. As a whole, the Budget Committee doesn't need to vote on this tonight. They would like Selectmen to consider this again. This will offset the insurance cost for the employees. Kohlhofer asked what is the percentage for insurance that is paid by the Town. Carlson said the Town pays 100% of the employee and 80% on anything additional. Martel thought maybe the Town could cut the contribution rate instead of cutting the hours.

A motion to reduce the salary 4191-001 Planning and Zoning clerical line to \$28,500 and the subtotal to \$51,450 was made by Kohlhofer. This was seconded by Allore. The vote was unanimous 7-0.

Martel asked that if a 36 hours work week is recommended can the Department Head then move money from another line item to give back the salaries. Carlson said yes, but that the Selectmen have the final authority. Carlson said the personnel policy needs to be changed, and that too is a Selectmen's decision. This would be a change in the definition of full time to be 36 hours and not 40 hours in some cases.

Carlson had a few things she wanted to hand out to the Budget Committee. She handed out the Government Buildings budget that had the Selectmen's recommendation and said that the cost of painting the Meeting House is back in. State revenue projections, definition of mandate, schedule state aid for cities and towns, budget recommendation spreadsheet for line items 4196, 4197 and 4199; and a spreadsheet showing comparisons from 2008 operating budget, 2009 MS7D and line item transfers by departments done by the Selectmen after Town Meeting to arrive at a total 2009 column. Bonnie Sandstrom information on School Charter and updated list of the Ellis School staff was given out by Carlson and St. Germain.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kimball. This was seconded by D'Eon. The vote was unanimous 7-0. The meeting ended at 10:00 PM.

The next Budget Committee meeting will be on November 4, 2009 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Nygren
Recording Secretary